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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: READOUT OF CHARGE'S MEETING WITH MOFA DFM SASAE ON
BURMA

REF: JAPAN DAR JUNE 18 2009

Classified By: CDA James P. Zumwalt for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Tokyo is conveying a firm message to Burmese leaders as part of Japan's engagement strategy with the country, Deputy Foreign Minister (DFM) Kenichiro Sasae told Charg Zumwalt on June 17. Sasae said that he used his June 3-5 trip to Burma to press Rangoon on human rights issues, fair treatment of political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi, and the importance of holding open elections in 2010. Burma is entering a critical period, particularly as members of the international community undergo their respective policy reviews on Burma, Sasae noted. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) DFM Sasae provided the Charg a brief readout of his June 3-5 trip to Burma, where he met the Burmese Foreign Minister, U Nyan Win, as well as the fifth-ranking member in the State Peace and Development Council. Sasae told Charg that Tokyo is conveying a strong message to Burma as part of Japan's engagement strategy with the country. He underscored the importance of policy balance--"being critical" of the Burmese regime while extracting positive results.

¶3. (C) Sasae said he emphasized human rights concerns during meetings with Burmese officials. He pressed his Burmese counterparts on the fair treatment of political prisoner Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and characterized her case as a "human rights issue," not a political issue. Burmese interlocutors responded by describing the situation as "judicial" and by stressing the independent nature of the Burmese court system. Sasae told the Charg that he anticipated additional delays to the proceedings.

¶4. (C) Burma is entering a critical period, particularly as members of the international community undergo their respective policy reviews on Burma, Sasae stressed during the trip. He told his counterparts that Rangoon needs to address directly international concerns about ASSK and about Burma's other 2100 political prisoners. He implored Rangoon to hold free and open elections, slated for 2010. There needs to be some way for ASSK and the junta to work things out, Sasae said.

15. (C) Sasae noted that Japan will have opportunities to appeal to the highest levels of the Burmese regime in the near- to mid-term future. Japan will invite the Burmese Foreign Minister to the Japan-Mekong Summit in September, for example. During his trip, Sasae broached the idea of talks involving Burma, the United States, China, and India, among other parties. U Nyan Win mentioned that he would relay the idea to his superiors but anticipated that his government would probably like to hold a bilateral meeting with the United States first.

ZUMWALT